

Claim 5 recites in pertinent part, “an encoder to apply a *composite code* to the optical data signal....” (Emphasis added.) Applicants submit that Mossberg fails to teach or suggest such a composite code. Mossberg generates output optical fields with time codes TC15 and TC16, respectively, which are separated into output beams 15e and 16e, respectively. Output beams 15e and 16e are then combined by a beam combiner 22 into a combined coded beam. Thus, Mossberg multiplexes beams having separate time codes into one combined coded beam. Mossberg does not teach or suggest applying a composite code to an optical data signal; rather, teaches multiplexing separately coded beams.

Furthermore, claim 5 recites in pertinent part, “a second station that is coupled to receive a decoded output signal from the first station.” Chen does not teach or suggest the second station. Referring to Figures 3 and 5, Chen uses a CDMA transmitter 40 to encode transmitted data with an address code and transmit the signal over fiber optic network 50 to CDMA receiver 60. Thus, Figure 5 depicts a single receiver and a single terminal (VBR SOURCE 114), not a second station coupled to receive a decoded output signal from the first station. Consequently, the cited references alone or in combination fail to teach or suggest each claim element as required (MPEP 2143.03) to establish *prima facie* obviousness. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the instant § 103(a) rejection for claim 5 be withdrawn.

Claim 8 recites in pertinent part, “a second destination that is coupled to receive the stripped signal from the first destination.” Applicants submit that neither Mossberg or Chen teach or suggest a second destination that receives a stripped signal from a first destination. More specifically, receiver 60 in Figure 5 of Chen, does not teach two separate destinations for a signal. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the instant § 103(a) rejection for claim 8 be withdrawn.

Claim 16 recites in pertinent part, “broadcasting the optical signal to a user station via the first station and the second station.” Neither Mossberg nor Chen teach or suggest sending a signal to a user via a first station and a second station. Therefore, claim 16 is patentable over the combination of Mossberg and Chen.

Claim 23 recites in pertinent part, “an decoder to decode a composite code from an optical data signal....” As discussed above, Applicants submit that Mossberg and

Chen fail to teach or suggest a composite code to identify a first and second station. Therefore, independent claim 23 is patentable over the combination of Mossberg and Chen.

Claim 26 recites in pertinent part, “an encoder to encode an optical signal to designate the multiplexing station’s level.” Applicants submit that the combination of Mossberg and Chen do not teach or suggest such an encoder. More specifically, Mossberg and Chen do not teach multiple levels of multiplexing stations. In fact, neither teaches or suggests multiplexing stations coupled to each other and receiving data from a user station. Accordingly, independent claim 26 is patentable over Mossberg and Chen.

Dependent claims 6-7, 9-10, 14-15, 16, 22, 24-25, and 27-28 are distinguishable over the prior art of record for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with their respective independent claims, in addition to adding further limitations of their own. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the instant §103(a) rejections for claims 6-7, 9-10, 14-15, 16, 22, 24-25, and 27-28 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants believe the applicable rejections have been overcome and all claims remaining in the application are presently in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned representative if the Examiner believes that an interview might be useful for any reason.

CHARGE DEPOSIT ACCOUNT

It is not believed that extensions of time are required beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, if additional extensions of time are necessary to prevent abandonment of this application, then such extensions of time are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a). Any fees required therefore are hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-2666. Please credit any overpayment to the same deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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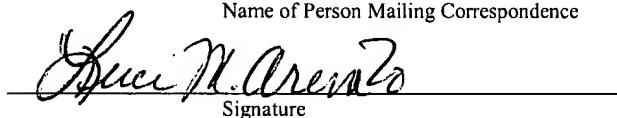
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